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ABSTRACT

This handbook contains guidelines for setting up a workplace literacy project through a partnership between business and an educational partner. It is based on the experiences of a workplace literacy partnership of Bakery Europa, Straub Clinic and Hospital, and the University of Hawaii. Information is provided on the following six topics: (1) building successful partnerships (duties and responsibilities of educational and business partners, composition and duties of advisory committee); (2) identifying workplace literacy needs (general and business-specific needs); (3) facilities; (4) instruction (goals, content, format, methodology, scheduling, and assessment); (5) recruitment (methods and incentives); and (6) evaluation (recordkeeping and effects on workplace productivity). (KC)

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A Program Handbook
To Meet the Essential ESL and Literacy Needs
Of the Baking and Health Care Industries

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I. BACKGROUND

From February 1, 1995 to December 31, 1998, Bakery Europa and Straub Clinic & Hospital participated in a workplace literacy project called Project BELIEVE. Project BELIEVE was designed to help employees gain the skills needed to become more productive workers and to enrich their lives. Bakery Europa and Straub Clinic & Hospital partnered with the University of Hawaii's College of Education to conduct the project. Instruction focused on the literacy, communication, interpersonal, and problem-solving skills needed to succeed in the baking and health care industries. These skills include English for non-native speakers, reading, business writing, math, effective communication strategies, and team building. The following recommendations for conducting workplace literacy programs with the baking and health care industry are based upon the experiences conducting Project BELIEVE.

II. BUILDING SUCCESSFUL PARTNERSHIPS

In workplace literacy programs, partnerships are usually formed between an educational organization and a business or labor union, and an advisory committee is usually formed to help guide the program. Hereafter, this document will use the example of business, but most things said about working with companies also applies to working with labor unions. In order for the partnership to be successful, each partner must be committed to the program. It's extremely helpful to outline the duties and responsibilities of each partner and the advisory committee at the start of the program. As partners are added or change their representatives, their commitments should be reviewed and adapted as needed.

A. Duties and Responsibilities of Educational Partner

Examples of common responsibilities of the educational partner include:

- conducting a needs assessment of the business to determine the specific needs of the company and its employees;
- developing and/or adapting curricula to meet the identified needs of the business and its employees;
- hiring and training instructors to teach English, communication, and literacy skills along with their applications in the workplace;
- getting to know the company and the people who work there;
- recruiting employees to participate in the workplace literacy program;
- teaching classes, workshops, individualized tutorials, and computer-assisted learning;
- assessing participants' progress;
- soliciting feedback from the company and employees about the program;
- maintaining data about participants' progress and feedback;
- giving feedback to the company about the program and participants' progress; and
- evaluating the efficacy of the program.

B. Duties and Responsibilities of the Business/Labor Partner

Examples of common responsibilities of the business partner include:

- providing information and company literature, such as the company's employee handbook, to the educational partner for the needs assessment and curricula development;
- allowing the educational partner to meet with front-line employees, supervisors, department heads, and upper level management;
- if possible, allowing the educational partner to observe and/or work with front-line employees for a few hours;
- providing on-site space for classes, workshops, and tutorials;
- reviewing course outlines, curricula, and participant progress reports;
- providing feedback about the program;
- allowing the educational partner to use office supplies and access to a photocopier;
- providing parking for the educational partner;
- encouraging employees to participate in the program;
- providing release time or compensation for employees who participate in the program;
- providing small items that can be used as incentives and door prizes; and
- allowing the educational partner access to information that can be used to document the project's efficacy, e. g. safety and attendance records, waste logs.

C. Composition and Duties of Advisory Committee

The advisory committee should consist of representatives from:

- the educational partner,
- the business partner. Representatives should be several levels in the company including management and the front-line.
- professionals in the industry, and
- literacy, adult education, English as a second language, and vocational education.

The committee should advise the partnership on the program's operation and provide expertise and support in various at no cost. Services may range from conducting training sessions to promoting the program to providing feedback from employees and the community.

III. IDENTIFYING WORKPLACE LITERACY NEEDS

Plan to spend a lot of time and effort in determining the initial and follow up needs of both the company and its employees. It's crucial to assess their needs accurately so that the workplace literacy program addresses those needs. Otherwise, instruction is too general and not relevant to their needs. Remember that the needs may change as the industry changes and/or the employees' skills improve.

A. General Workplace Needs

An excellent starting point, is the 1992 report by the U.S. Department of Labor's Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS), *Learning a Living: A Blueprint for High Performance: A SCANS Report for America 2000.* This report identifies critical workplace competencies and foundation skills that all employees need. As outlined on page xiv of the report, these are:

Workplace Competencies: -- Effective workers can productively use:

- Resources -- They know how to allocate time, money, materials, space, and staff.
- Interpersonal skills -- They can work on teams, teach others, serve customers, lead, negotiate, and work well with people from culturally diverse backgrounds.
- Information -- They can acquire and evaluate data, organize and maintain files, interpret and communicate, and use computers to process information.
- Systems -- They understand social, organizational, and technological systems; they can monitor and correct performance; and they can design or improve systems.
- Technology -- They can select equipment and tools, apply technology to specific tasks, and maintain and troubleshoot equipment.

Foundation Skills: -- Competent workers in the high-performance workplace need:

- Basic Skills -- reading, writing, arithmetic and mathematics, speaking, and listening.
- Thinking Skills -- the ability to learn, to reason, to think creatively, to make decisions, and to solve problems.
- Personal Qualities -- individual responsibility, self-esteem and self-management, sociability, and integrity.

B. Business Specific Needs

The needs of the company and its employees can be assessed in the following ways:

- Job shadow employees: To find out what they actually do on the job, observe them as they perform their jobs, talk to them about their job requirements and what difficulties they may have meeting those requirements, and if possible, do their jobs with them for a few hours.
- Communicate with supervisors: Survey and talk with supervisors to discover their expectations for employees, problems that typically occur, employees' specific strengths and weaknesses, and get feedback on how the workplace literacy program has affected employees' performance on the job.
- Review job descriptions: Review job descriptions that the company has, to learn the duties of specific positions and the job descriptions as outlined by V-TECS to

supplement that information. V-TECS (Vocational Technical Education Consortium of States) is a national organization that identifies types of jobs in different industries along with their duties, tasks, and performance objectives and develops curriculum for specific vocational areas.

- Review customer feedback: Customers will highlight any areas in which the company needs to improve its products or services.
- Review any skill standards developed: For example, the Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development developed and validated voluntary skill standards for the health care industry. These standards are detailed in the 1995 report, *National Health Care Skill Standards*.
- Consult experts from the industry: These experts have information on the industry's needs as well as the company's role.
- Review evaluations from participants in the workplace literacy program: The evaluations should give participants the opportunity to provide feedback about the program's usefulness and areas that could be improved.

IV. FACILITIES

A. Space

On-site facilities make it easy for employees to attend classes, workshops, and tutorials because it's very convenient. If a class is held one block away, employees are much less likely to attend. Ideally, a room would be dedicated to the workplace literacy program or training in general, and the room could be set up for large group, small group, or individual instruction. This makes it much easier to schedule instruction and gives employees a set reference point to find out about the project and its services. If a room cannot be dedicated for the sole use of education and training, on-site space should be provided as needed for classes, workshops, and tutorials.

B. Equipment

Necessities include:

- standard office supplies (e.g. phone, fax, stapler, scissors, paper clips, filing cabinet, bookshelves, desk),
- a computer that can be used for word processing and developing spreadsheets and databases as well as for computer-assisted learning,
- a photocopier,
- tables and chairs that can be used for classes, workshops, and tutorials,
- a chalkboard, whiteboard, or flipchart, and
- a bulletin board to post announcements.

C. Hours

The program's hours of operation depend heavily on the individual needs of the company and its employees because the workplace literacy program's

services should be available to everyone. Generally, companies in both the baking and health care industries can be open 24 hours per day; however, that doesn't mean staffing the workplace literacy program 24 hours per day. Even if a company is open at all hours, the majority of employees may work during one or two shifts or on certain days. For example, a 24-hour bakery may have a morning, afternoon, and night shift, but the night shift requires fewer workers because the ordering desk and business office are closed. Find out the specific schedules of the business partner and the employees targeted for the workplace program, and develop the program's schedule around them.

Having a program staff member on-site at the company gives employees a person to associate with the program making it much easier to establish a trusting, working relationship. Employees may be afraid to take classes, but if they become familiar with the program's staff, project staff can show them that the learning environment is non-threatening and reassure that they can improve their skills. In order to cultivate employees' confidence, program staff should be available outside of class and encourage employees to find out more about the program.

It's good to have established hours and the flexibility to accommodate workers who have scheduling conflicts because of the demands of the job. Project BELIEVE staff was on-site at Bakery Europa from Mondays to Fridays from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. and Saturdays from 8:00 a.m. to noon and on-site at Straub Clinic & Hospital Mondays and Tuesdays from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Wednesdays from 8:00 a.m. to noon. This gave employees the opportunity to study and/or learn more about the project's services before work, after work, and during breaks. Project staff also scheduled meetings at other times if employees were unable to come during the set hours. For example, an employee getting off the night shift wanted to study before going home, so project staff tutored that individual from 7:00 to 8:00 a.m.

V. INSTRUCTION

A. Goals

Base the goals upon the identified needs. The goals will generally fall into the categories below. Each category is followed by an example of a task that requires this skill or knowledge.

i. The baking industry

- reading skills – reading work orders to learn how many items to produce,
- writing skills – completing company forms such as waste logs,
- math skills – calculating how many boxes are needed to pack the products,
- interpersonal communication skills – suggesting how to resolve a problem,

- knowledge of products – reporting production status,
- knowledge of safety and sanitation concepts – preventing cross-contamination, and
- problem solving and team building skills – filling a rush order after the power was out for two hours.

ii. The health care industry

- oral communication – giving instructions to a patient,
- English grammar and business writing skills – writing memos,
- interpersonal skills, including adapting to others based on the knowledge and understanding of their cultures – supervising someone from another country,
- problem solving skills – identifying ways to attract new clients, and
- team building skills – deciding how to re-budget when funding has been reduced.

B. Content

Examine curricula and other materials that have already been developed for the baking industry and adapt these to meet the specific needs of the business and its employees. Adaptations should include literature and information from the company, e.g. the company's employee handbook and order sheet. Some useful resources to start with are:

for the baking industry:

- *Food Production, Management, and Services: Baking, Second Edition* written by LeRoy Gibson and developed by the Mid-America Vocational Curriculum Consortium, Inc. in 1992
- *English Works!* written by Joan Rubin, Sharon McKay, and Inaam Mansoor and published by Addison-Wesley in 1995
- the *Essential Mathematics for Life* series published by Scott, Foresman and Company
- *The New Oxford Picture Dictionary* published by Oxford University Press

for the health care industry:

- *Good Grief, Good Grammar: The Business Person's Guide to Grammar and Usage* written by Dianna Booher and published by Facts on File Publications in 1998
- *Grammar for Smart People: A Grown-up Guide to Speaking and Writing Better English* published by Communication Dynamics International, Inc. in 1997
- *Racial and Ethnic Groups* written by Richard Schaeffer and published by Harper-Collins in 1993

- *Allied Health Careers* written by Betty Duncan and published by the Oklahoma State Department of Vocational and Technical Education, Curriculum and Instructional Materials Center in 1987
- *English as a Second Language Resource Manual Volume III, Part 2: Intensive English as a Second Language Cultural Orientation Pre-employment Training Program* developed by the Bureau of Refugee Programs, U.S. Department of State in 1983

Project BELIEVE developed curriculum guides for the baking and health care industries containing samples of modules that the project used. These modules were either adopted/adapted from existing resources or developed by project staff. The curriculum guides are available for loan from the Western Curriculum Coordination Center.

C. Format

Instruction can be offered in the form of classes, workshops, tutorials, computer-assisted learning, and independent learning activities. Classes and workshops are preferable because they allow employees to interact and learn from each other, practice teamwork and problem solving, and are more cost-efficient. Classes give the opportunity for in-depth instruction; however, oftentimes it may be difficult for participants to attend all the sessions. This problem can be avoided by making each session a self-contained module not contingent upon other sessions or by presenting the information in a series of concise workshops. Businesses prefer modular instruction, but some topics, i.e. learning English, by their very nature require on-going instruction. Tutorials are recommended when employees have schedule conflicts and cannot attend classes or workshops, want help in specific areas, or want to keep their studies confidential. Independent mini-lessons can be developed so that when employees are unable to attend tutorials, workshops, or classes, they can still improve the skills needed to succeed in their jobs.

Outline the entire class, workshop, or series of tutorials ahead of time, i.e. have lesson plans, and file them in a central location. This enables a substitute instructor to fill in when necessary. Project BELIEVE staff found it very useful to have the following information for each session:

- instructional objectives,
- learning activities,
- estimated time required,
- resources and materials needed, and
- how to determine if participants have met each objective.

D. Methodology

Because workplace literacy programs primarily serve adults, instruction must be interactive and practical to keep participants interested. Interactive

activities, such as those used in cooperative learning, allow participants to practice team building and problem solving strategies that they must use on the job. Demonstrating the practical applications of the skills and concepts studied answers the question, "What's in it for me?" and shows the relevancy to real life; adults lose interest when instruction is too abstract.

E. Scheduling

Before scheduling classes and workshops, find out when the most people can attend. These times tend to be:

- on certain days of the week. For example, a bakery may not be as busy on Mondays and Tuesdays as it is on Thursdays and Fridays.
- around shift changes. Often, employees are willing to come an hour earlier or stay an hour later. Sometimes, the company can arrange for shifts to overlap slightly so that employees from both shifts can attend classes and workshops.
- during lunch. Some employees agree to a working lunch and attend workshops then.

F. Assessment

Assessment is an essential component of all instruction. Each course, tutorial, and workshop should begin with a pre-test. This enables instructors to identify each participant's level of proficiency and to fine-tune course materials to meet the needs of all participants. Correspondingly, each course, tutorial, and workshop should end with a post-test, and the pre- and post-test scores compared to measure each participant's progress. Assessment instruments may be standardized. Project BELIEVE used standardized tests developed by CASAS (Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System) – assessment instruments developed specifically for adults and validated by the U.S. Department of Education for adult literacy – in the English as a second language and math programs. Assessment instruments may also be program specific, developed to meet the particular needs of the business and its employees. Employees with low literacy skills should be given oral pre- and post-tests.

Participants can also assess their own abilities before and after instruction. Project BELIEVE participants answered the same form when they enrolled in classes and tutorials and after they completed the classes and tutorials. The form is at the top of the next page.

During a class or tutorial (on-going instruction), it's important for participants to assess what they've studied. Participants should spend the last few minutes of every session reflecting on what they've learned. They can fill out a half sheet of paper completing the following statements:

- The objective was...(e.g. to learn to fill out vacation papers)
- In today's class, we...(e.g. looked at the company's vacation policy and forms)
- I will use what we learned to...(e.g. request vacation next month)

Name: _____ Dept.: _____

Date: _____ Class: _____

Please rate your ability to perform each of the following activities. (Check one box for each activity.)

Activity:	Your Ability:	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
a. Read English		☐	☐	☐	☐
b. Understand English		☐	☐	☐	☐
c. Speak English		☐	☐	☐	☐
d. Write English		☐	☐	☐	☐
e. Work as part of a team		☐	☐	☐	☐
f. Use math		☐	☐	☐	☐
g. Solve problems/use reasoning		☐	☐	☐	☐

- Additional comments...(e.g. how do I apply for a position in another department?)

After a class, workshop, or tutorial, participants should provide feedback so that the program can be improved. Project BELIEVE used the form on the next page, adapted from a business partner, to solicit feedback.

VI. RECRUITMENT

A. Methods

Some proven ways to recruit participants are:

- holding several all-day open houses for employees;
- talking with employees in the lunch room before work, during breaks, and after work;
- attending department meetings to present information about the program;
- getting referrals from supervisors identifying who would particularly benefit from the project's services;
- getting participants to encourage their coworkers to use the program's services. This is extremely helpful because participants can allay their coworkers' fears about attending classes, workshops, and tutorials.
- posting information, including registration for classes and workshops, in the company's training calendar and in areas that employees frequent, e.g. in the lunchroom;

Workshop Evaluation

Class: _____ **Instructor:** _____

Date: _____ **Time:** _____

Please respond to the following statements.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. The course proved to be consistent with the stated objectives.	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. The instructor showed good command of the subject.	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. The instructor responded to the needs of the group and encouraged participation.	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. The program materials were used effectively.	☐	☐	☐	☐

5. What did you get out of this session?

6. What will you share back on the job?

7. What did the instructor do to make the class a success for you?

8. What other training topics would assist you in doing your job better?

Comments:

- including information about the program in the company's new hire orientation process;
- having a daily newspaper available so that employees could come in and read;
- participating in local and national workshops and conferences; and
- publishing a project newsletter, in which staff and participants write about their experiences with the program.

B. Incentives

Sometimes learning to improve one's own productivity at work or learning for its own sake is insufficient motivation. People often need an external push to motivate them. The program and company must work together to provide incentives, which can be relatively small. Examples of successful incentives are:

- offering refreshments,
- awarding small prizes, e.g. dictionaries and gift certificates,
- publishing participant's work in the company or program newsletter
- giving certificates of completion (see the next page for a sample),
- arranging for a more consistent work schedule. At some companies, work schedules vary weekly. Employees would appreciate having a certain day off every week allowing them to schedule other things for that day. For example, if Mondays are always the day off from work, then all errands and appointments can be done on Mondays.
- compensating participants, either in release time or monetarily.

VII. EVALUATION

A. Record Keeping

It's crucial to maintain accurate records so that the questions below, and others like them, can be answered quickly.

- How many people has the workplace program served?
- What content areas (e.g. English as a second language, communication) have the best enrollment?
- What is the progress of employees who have been in the program for a year?
- What have been the best times to hold classes?
- Which departments have used the program's services?

i. Forms

Design forms so that participants can complete them easily and the information can be easily put into the computer. Sample forms for participants to assess their abilities and to evaluate workshops are found in previous sections, and a sample of an initial enrollment form is on the last four pages of the handbook.

ii. Software

It's good to use database and spreadsheet programs because they can easily manipulate data. Database programs, such as Access, can be set up to produce forms, tables, reports, and queries. Spreadsheet programs, such as Excel, can work with the database and further sort the data. It's essential to set up the database program so that it's flexible and can be used to answer various questions.

iii. Inputting data

Develop a manual for using the database and spreadsheet programs, and train several people to input the data. Input data immediately after a class, workshop, or tutorial ends; otherwise, it'll accumulate too quickly and be very time-consuming to enter.

B. Effects on Workplace Productivity

The bottom line purpose of workplace literacy programs is to improve employees' skills and knowledge so that their productivity increases, which in turn makes the business more profitable. Positive gains in productivity will strengthen management support and commitment to the program as well as improve employee's job satisfaction and security. To determine the program's effects, examine the company's reports and data for the following:

- employee attendance,
- safety,
- waste,
- customer satisfaction,
- sanitation, and
- employee performance reports (e.g. annual evaluations).

The company usually already collects these types of data.

Be aware that it is difficult to attribute changes solely to the workplace literacy program. There are usually compounding factors such as other training programs and new processes being implemented. If possible, show how all efforts are working together to help the company and its employees.

Learner Enrollment Form

This section to be completed by instructor.

A. Course Number: _____

Course Name: _____

B. This form was completed by (check one):

- ☐ The learner
- ☐ The learner, with assistance from instructor or project staff
- ☐ An instructor or project staff member with information provided by the learner
- ☐ Other (please specify): _____

C. Date form completed:

_____ _____, 19_____
Month Day Year

The United States Department of Education is concerned with protecting the privacy of individuals who participate in voluntary surveys. Your reponses will be combined with those of other survey participants, and the answers you provide will never be identified as yours. This survey is authorized by law (20 U.S.C. 1221e.1). You may skip questions you do not want to answer; however, we hope you will answer as many as you can.

Learner Enrollment Form

1. Name: _____ _____
   Last First

2. Social Security Number: _____

3. Age: _____ (years)

4. Sex:

   ☐ Male

   ☐ Female

5. Race (check one):

   ☐ Black (African American)
   ☐ Caucasian
   ☐ Chinese
   ☐ Filipino
   ☐ Hawaiian/part Hawaiian
   ☐ Indochinese
   ☐ Japanese
   ☐ Korean
   ☐ Portuguese
   ☐ Other _____

6. Is **English** the language that is spoken most often in your home?

   ☐ Yes

   ☐ No

7. If you answered "No" to #6, what language is spoken most often in your home? (please specify):

   _____

8. How many years of school have you completed?
(check one box in each column)

In the United States:	**In Any Other Country:**
☐ No schooling	☐ No schooling
☐ 1-5 years	☐ 1-5 years
☐ 6-8 years	☐ 6-8 years
☐ 9 years	☐ 9 years
☐ 10 years	☐ 10 years
☐ 11 years	☐ 11 years
☐ 12 or more years	☐ 12 or more years

9. Please rate your ability to perform each of the following activities. (check one box for each activity)

Activity: **Your Ability:**	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
a. Read English	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. Understand English	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. Speak English	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. Write in English	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. Work as part of a team	☐	☐	☐	☐
f. Use math	☐	☐	☐	☐
g. Solve problems/use reasoning	☐	☐	☐	☐

Please answer questions 10-17 for the job that allows you to take this course.

10. Name of company or employer: _____

___ ___ ___ ___ (←for project use only)

11. Job title: (for example, "nursing assistant", "housekeeper", etc.)

_____

12. Approximately how many hours per week do you work on this job?

_____ (hours per week)

13. Do you receive any of the following benefits from this job?
(check one box for each benefit)

Benefits:	Yes	No
a. Paid vacation	☐	☐
b. Paid sick leave	☐	☐
c. Paid holidays	☐	☐
d. Health insurance	☐	☐

14. How long have you worked at this job? _____ Years and _____ Months

15. Do you work at more than one job? ☐ Yes ☐ No

16. At your job, do you need to do any of the following?
(check one box for each activity)

Activity:	Yes	No
a. Receive written instruction in English	☐	☐
a. Receive spoken instruction in English	☐	☐
b. Speak in English	☐	☐
b. Write in English	☐	☐
c. Use math	☐	☐
d. Solve problems as part of a team	☐	☐
e. Suggest improvements	☐	☐

17. Are you willing to attend classes before or after regular working hours?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Thank you. Please return the completed form to your instructor.